



January 24, 2023

To House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

From: Oregon Association of Conservation Districts

Re: **Support for HB 2971 – Property Tax Special Assessment on Farmland During Voluntary Instream Leasing of Water Rights**

Chair Helm and Committee Members,

The Oregon Association of Conservation Districts (OACD) represents Oregon's 45 Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs), special districts governed by elected boards. The Districts protect and enhance soil quality, water quality and quantity, and habitat by supporting voluntary conservation in partnership with private landowners and managers as well as federal, state, and nonprofit partners.

OACD supports HB 2971 which specifies that farmland should be eligible for the reduced property tax special assessment during times when the water to farm the land is being used under in-stream leasing provisions in statute. The ability to lease water for instream uses helps avoid waste of water when it is not needed by putting it to beneficial use, and it is a valuable tool in managing the State's water. Farm operations should not have burdensome tax consequences when they participate in the program, and this fixes this problem.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stan Dean".

Stan Dean, Advocacy Committee Chair
Oregon Association of Conservation Districts
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